



[Web Site](#) | [Contact me](#) | [About the Legislature](#)

3rd Legislative District

January 14, 2011

Senator Brown and her team are ready to serve YOU!

All three of my staff look forward to assisting you and are ready to answer your questions this legislative session. Click [here](#) for their contact information.



Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown – Center, From Left to Right, Jeannine Roe - Legislative Assistant, Marcus Riccelli - Senior Policy Advisor, Mariah McKay - Legislative Aide (Photo courtesy of the Washington State Senate)

Shedding new light on elections

Attack ads in political elections are nothing new, but last year they sunk to landmark lows in efforts to hide the identities and agendas of the groups behind them. This session we are pursuing aggressive reforms to make the sources of the messages more easily identifiable by voters and to increase the penalties for violations of our election laws.

This is a nonpartisan problem — candidates in both parties were targeted by a wide number of special interest groups — and the solutions we pursue will be similarly nonpartisan and promote transparency and campaign integrity. Better disclosure of the groups behind political advertising will help voters of all parties and ideologies make choices that best reflect their interests. Click [here](#) to read my November blog post on this issue. Our efforts are being led by [Sen. Craig Pridemore](#). You can read about Sen. Pridemore’s bill [here](#), read press coverage of his plan [here](#) and [here](#), and read positive reviews by the editorial boards of The Seattle Times and The Columbian [here](#) and [here](#).

Coalition Delivers Petitions to Senator Brown

A coalition of SEIU Healthcare 775NW, child care providers from SEIU Local 925, members of AARP, the Statewide Poverty Action Network and other advocates delivered 28,000 signed petitions and postcards to me on the first day of the 2011 Legislative Session. They were signed by people throughout the state who support closing corporate tax loopholes as a way of generating more revenue. Click [here](#) to read my blog post on our State’s problem with collecting revenue and what I have termed our state’s “Lake Wobegon Gap.”

Home foreclosures

Senate and House Democrats are working together to address the home foreclosure crisis that is putting tens of thousands of Washington families at risk.

Companion bills in both chambers will take a multi-pronged approach that, among other things, will strengthen the requirement for banks to “meet and confer” with homeowners to explore the homeowners’ ability to pay an existing or modified mortgage rather than foreclose on the property.

The bills also create a requirement for mediation if the lender and homeowner cannot reach agreement during the “meet and confer” process. This has been shown to greatly reduce foreclosures in other states.

In addition, the bills would provide funding for more revenue counselors to work with homeowners to reduce foreclosures; amend the foreclosure process to make easier “cash

for keys” exchanges between banks and homeowners; and provides consumer protections in the event of failures in complying with the foreclosure process.

Budget Issues

Below is an excerpt from my blog post titled *Washington’s Lake Wobegon gap*. To read the full text click [here](#).

We’re in the third year of significant recessionary impacts on our state budget. And for the third year in a row, we hear loud talk about making Washington live within its means by cutting state spending to match diminished revenues.

The truth is, [state spending compared to personal income has been declining for a decade](#). And all this talk about “living within our means” masks another important truth: We can’t keep cutting spending without downgrading the public services mentioned above. And if we keep downgrading these same services, we can’t expect to maintain our quality of life, much less improve it.

We shouldn’t let our high marks in some areas overshadow our underperformance in others. Like the fact that we’re [31st among states in high school graduation rates](#). Or that we’re [below average in per pupil funding](#) for K-12 education, and [near the top for most crowded K-12 classrooms](#). Or that we’re [far below the national average in higher education funding per student](#). Or that, while we’re 11th in overall health, we’re [20th in public health funding](#), [36th in immunization rates](#), and [42nd in prenatal care](#).

Yes, we need to align our spending with our revenues and balance our budget – and we will do that. But we also need to align our revenues with our expectations about our quality of life. As the 2011 legislative session approaches and legislators grapple with a \$5 billion revenue shortfall in the next two-year budget, we need to have a conversation about what kind of state we want to be. If we want a top-quarter quality of life – and if we view the preceding paragraph as a call to do better – we can’t hold onto a tax structure in the lower half of the country. This session needs to be about addressing Washington’s Lake Wobegon gap – and woe betide us if we don’t...

Sincerely,



Click [here](#) for contact information for my Olympia or Spokane office.

If at any time you decide you no longer wish to receive updates from me, please go to <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/subscriptions/member.aspx?chamber=s&member=brown> to remove your name from the list

Washington Senate Democrats – [SenateDemocrats.wa.gov](https://senatedemocrats.wa.gov)